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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District: **Mount Pleasant Historic District** (x) Consent Calendar  
Address: **1709 Harvard Street, NW**

Meeting Date: **February 28, 2013** (x) Addition  
Case Number: **13-149**

Staff Reviewer: **Tim Dennée**

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The applicants, property owners Stephane Muszynski and Wendy Hanks (with Landis Construction), request the Board's review of a concept for the construction of a one-story kitchen addition at the rear of the two-story rowhouse.

The subject property is one of 31 modernist rowhouses designed by Joseph Abel and constructed in 1943-44 for Shapiro, Inc. The modest, two-bedroom homes were built for rental. The row was set well back from the street, likely to take advantage of the falling topography in front for a heavily treed landscape. The shallower rear yards, naturally given over to uses such as parking, are disadvantaged by that same topography, as the alley grade is higher than that of the houses' main floors, and the rear yards slope down to the houses. With the typical six- or seven-foot-tall rear-yard fences, the handful of one-story rear additions on the row has little visual impact on the historic district.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed addition would extend twelve feet rearward and nearly sixteen feet wide between the two side lot lines. It would include an entirely below-grade basement level with no windows or areaways. It would stand more than twelve feet tall, with a parapet all around. The roof would have two skylights, obscured by the parapet. The skin of the structure would be white stucco. The roof would be drained through long scuppers onto a curved glass canopy on the rear elevation. The only drawback to this last aspect is the possibility that water shed from the canopy might run down the white stucco wall and stain it, something that might be lessened with a greater pitch to the canopy.

The size and massing of the addition are suited to the character of a modestly sized, boxy house, and the vocabulary of the addition, a take on Modernism, is also appropriate. White stucco may not be the most compatible material to join the mid-century red brick, but in this context, it is sufficiently compatible and probably little noticeable even, from public space. The house's rear wall, at the first-floor juncture with the addition, would be demolished, but this seems unavoidable in an effort to extend the kitchen space, unless one were to construct a deeper, full-room-sized addition.

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<sup>1</sup> There is also one house with a two-story addition.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends approval of the concept as submitted as compatible with the character of the subject property and that of the historic district.*